

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on SB 1148 and SB 1149. I am adamantly opposed to the passage of each of these bills.

As a long-time resident of New Haven, I never expected to need to testify on behalf of CT's black bear population. It saddens me that people have encroached so severely upon their territory, making sightings, and panic, more and more commonplace. A baby bear cut through my yard last year. I was thrilled to see it, but also concerned that some harm might befall it, at the hands of a human. Thankfully, it remained safe, as did all of us in the neighborhood.

With VERY FEW exceptions, there should be no need to kill wildlife. These animals inhabited our state before we did and, for the most part, remain hidden from view. They surface when they are hungry, looking for a mate, or traveling from one location to the next. Their intent is not to harm us. They are simply trying to survive. Human beings claim to have superior intellect, however, if we are so smart, why can't we learn to respect animals and give them some space? We don't need to inflict pain and suffering, and, ultimately, death upon them. If we don't want to attract them to our communities, we need to be vigilant, and remove potential food sources. We also need to block off access to any area where they can settle in. If there is no food, or shelter, there is no incentive for them to hang around. Locked doors, whether they be the entry point to our cars, or our homes, keep us safe from human predators, as well as opportunistic, and curious, animals.

Decimating the black bear population, particularly those who are deep in the woods and not bothering anyone, is not the answer to this situation. In addition to being a barbaric and unnecessary response, eliminating animals from the ecosystem causes other problems. With all of the damage that has already been done to the environment, why would we want to add to it by killing these majestic creatures?

Education and common sense are the key to peacefully co-existing with bears, and any other animal that someone may deem problematic, somewhere down the road. Violence is not. Please vote against the passage of these bills and, instead, endorse humane practices.

Thank you.